



Department of Justice

PS
653
1246

REMARKS

BY

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAMSEY CLARK

AT THE

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CRIME CONTROL

Department of State Conference Area

Tuesday, March 28, 1967

This can be a historic conference. Whether it proves so depends in large measure on our firm commitment to its purpose. The nation has waited a long time for such a gathering. More than 600 professionals in the administration of criminal justice--leading law enforcement officers, judges and correctional personnel from every state--meet to plan implementation of a national strategy to arrest and then reverse the trend toward lawlessness.

Had this been done a generation ago following the Wickersham Commission report, criminal justice in America might be of a significantly higher quality. It is for us to see to it that a generation hence the same observation cannot be made of President Johnson's crime commission report.

The report can be either a blueprint of a national strategy for crime control or another ancient and forgotten tome.

Police, courts and prisons cannot alone control crime. We must also deal with the underlying causes of crime--immense and stubborn forces pervading our environment, measuring our character and determining the quality of our lives.

Through long-range effort we can conquer poverty, ignorance, disease, discrimination, social tension and despair, family breakdown, the dehumanization of mass culture, injustice. But while we strive to uproot the causes of crime, we must secure the public safety.

Protecting the lives, the property and the rights of its citizens is the first purpose of government. The level and quality of public safety and criminal justice afforded by our governments is not adequate to our need. It must be made so.

Crime is a national problem. It tarnishes the goodness of life in every part of the country.

But law enforcement is a local responsibility. As a nation we have preached local law enforcement. As a nation we have practiced it. There are more of New York's finest, the police of New York City, than there are federal law enforcement officers for the nation. Los Angeles county has six times more deputy sheriffs than there are deputy U. S. Marshals for the whole United States, and the Los Angeles Police Department is larger than the sheriff's office. A single county has twice as many probation service officers as the entire Federal Probation Service. The Federal Bureau of Prisons has less than five percent of the prison population of the nation. The federal judiciary is but a tiny fraction of the judiciary of the states.

We assembled here are involved in the processes of criminal justice. This is our business and our responsibility. It is for us to bring excellence to every aspect of the administration of criminal justice--to corrections, to courts, to police--in every jurisdiction in the United States.

We must recognize the wide diversity and variations of needs and problems among law enforcement agencies, and

the necessity for flexibility. We must recognize that law enforcement is a service with perhaps 90 percent of its expenditures going for salaries; that corrections and courts are undermanned and controlled by state laws often needing change; that crime is increasing more rapidly than population; that 50,000 new police officers must be recruited this year to fill present positions.

For criminal justice--local, state and federal--we spend only slightly more than \$4 billion dollars annually: 2.8 billion is for police; 1.03 billion for corrections and 350 million for courts and prosecution. This is clearly inadequate to meet present need.

The elements of criminal justice are interdependent. Each phase of crime control--investigation, enforcement, prosecution, adjudication and correction--is dependent for its success on successes in the other phases. A city, a county and a state can succeed only when all cities, counties and states succeed. No jurisdiction is an island entire of itself. Each is a part of the main.

Our purpose is to commit ourselves to excellence as we now see it and later refine it.

This will require definitive planning coordinated with all relevant agencies. Our times, our numbers, the complexity of our lives compel planning.

We must disenthral ourselves from the dogmas of the quiet past to think anew and act anew. Urbanization, population explosion, technological advance cause sweeping, accelerating change. Law enforcement must anticipate and initiate.

To the service we must bring the best and most dedicated talents among us. These we must train and perfect. We must bring out the best in all who serve. The direct impact of police, judges and corrections officers on the well being of each of us increases annually. We cannot afford less than the best.

We must engage in a continuing conversation--a free interchange of experience. Effective coordination among all agencies is necessary and research and development should be available for every criminal justice need.

The strategy on which we are about to embark has been developing over several years. It is supported by the most comprehensive study of crime ever undertaken.

Eighteen months' federal grant experience under the Law Enforcement Assistance Act has financed significant research, development and demonstration projects in 47 states with the expenditure of \$11 million dollars.

A solid foundation has been laid for a major federal program to stimulate wise investment in law enforcement. President Johnson's Crime Control Act anticipates trebling the rate of investment for public safety and criminal justice.

We have a great opportunity. We must make the most of it. We look for a working conference of meat and potatoes. Let us begin.